

full extent of the law. So that is very important. The National District Attorneys Association, the National Sheriffs Association, the Police Executive Research Forum and 31 State attorneys general endorse the bill. That is very impressive.

And it is supported by over 45 leading mainstream religious organizations, who dismiss claims that the bill would somehow interfere with religious speech "unfounded fears."

Enacting the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Protection Act is a critical step towards keeping our communities safe from hate-based violence and ensuring that all Americans can enjoy the blessings of liberty without fear.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia talked about the rule of law. It is the rule of law that we are concerned with today, the rule of law that this administration refuses to obey with regard to sending us the documents and the information the statute requires so that we could make an intelligent decision about this conference report.

He talks about issues. Regardless of where you stand on this legislation, you could talk about transportation, space exploration, health care reform or immigration reform. But they have no place in the Defense authorization bill.

I just want to point out to the Speaker and to those listening to the debate, at 5:36 tonight we made the motion to go into conference. The report is already being written. It is a take-it-or-leave-it report. This is the only shot anyone will have at changing this report.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished ranking member from California, Congressman McKEON.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And my good friend from Georgia that just gave a strong message of his support for hate crimes, I respect, and I have a strong feeling against it. But the issue that we are here on the floor talking about should be the defense of our Nation, especially when we are at a time of war.

While the Senate was considering the National Defense Authorization Act, division E was attached to the bill as an amendment. The NDAA is an inappropriate vehicle for this controversial and unconstitutional legislation. Hate crimes proponents are using this important national security bill to get this legislation to the President's desk through the back door.

This has no place on the Defense bill. It's not germane to the work of the committee, couldn't be added on in the House, had to be done in the Senate, and needlessly introduces a partisan matter in an otherwise bipartisan bill. We need a clean conference report that does honor to the men and women in uniform.

There is one thing that we all agree on, and that is that violent crime is deplorable, regardless of its motivation. That is why all violent crimes must be vigorously prosecuted. However, a decision to prosecute should not be based on the status of the victim or the thought process of the perpetrator. Violence is violence and should be dealt with accordingly.

We've had several meetings of the so-called "big four" talking about working on the conference report on this committee. Chairman SKELTON and I were in agreement on this issue. We felt that it should not be added to the conference report. This bill passed in the House. It passed in the Senate. I don't know why they can't bring it to the floor as a freestanding bill and have it pass on its own. Why we need to attach it to a Defense bill is because the Defense bill needs to be passed, and people will vote for it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FORBES. I yield the gentleman 30 additional seconds.

Mr. McKEON. I think it's a crime to add it to a bill that is so important that we pass every year for our troops, for those men and women in uniform, that we have to muddy up the issue by putting a hate crimes legislation attached onto this bill.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) who is the distinguished chairman of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I agree: it makes no more logical sense to add a hate crimes bill to the Defense bill than it would to take a bill requiring people to be allowed to use their guns in the national parks to a credit card bill. But that's what the Senate did. The Senate added a bill dealing with the rights of gun owners in the national parks to the credit card bill with which there was no logical connection.

Now, I wish the Senate wouldn't do things like that. I wish a lot of things. But when we are confronted with the reality of the Senate, we have to act.

Now, it is conceivable that you would have people who are so devoted to the principle of having no illogical attachment that they would oppose it in every case. I must have been in the Cloakroom when Republicans rose to denounce the Senate for adding the bill allowing the use of guns in parks to the credit card bill. That was done. Not a single Republican, to my recollection, objected. Indeed, quite to the contrary, they all voted for it, which makes it very clear: the objection here is not to the Senate adding an unrelated bill, because the Republicans in this House have voted for that time and time and time again. It is an objection to protecting against hate crimes people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Now, some say we shouldn't have these hate crimes laws. But their in-

consistency is I don't remember them trying to repeal the hate crimes laws that are on the books. There is nothing new about hate crimes here. There is nothing new about its constitutionality. By the way, if you say violence should be violence, how about somebody having the intellectual integrity to get up and repeal that statute that says, if someone assaults someone standing next to me, it might be a misdemeanor, but if somebody assaults me, a Member of Congress, it's a Federal felony. We have a major distinction. We are protected by special laws, older people, people who are religious. Then they say, it's a matter of choice. The level of intelligence involved in thinking that being gay or lesbian is a matter of choice aside, religion is a matter of choice. People convert to religions. Does that mean we shouldn't protect people against hate crimes based on religion?

Finally, we are told this is being sneaked through. One of the earlier speakers, in a total flight from reality, said it is being sneaked through. It passed the House. It was debated. It went through the regular committee process, and it passed the House. Yes, from time to time, the United States Senate, which has no rules preventing it, adds unrelated bills. If there are Members who have consistently opposed that practice, they have the right to oppose it here and say that is the reason.

But Members who have voted for legislation which the Senate attached to unrelated legislation who claim now to be offended by that practice clearly have no logical or other basis on which to make that claim.

There are people who do not think we should add a very vulnerable category, particularly people who are transgender, to the hate crimes protection. They lost that fight when we had it in the House. I would have had it come up again, but it is clearly just another example of another time-tried practice.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I continue to scratch my head as I listen to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts who argues that just because the leadership of the House and the leadership of the Senate have followed the process time and again that the end justifies the means and that we ought to do it all the time.

But I would point out to the gentleman that this is not all the time. This is not a credit card bill. This is the national defense of the United States of America. It is our very freedoms. And we need to understand that just because some of us have had to vote on bills where we had no opportunity to debate them, where we didn't have time to read them and where we didn't have time to amend them doesn't make it right. And in this particular case, it doesn't make it right because the reality is only two individuals, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the chairman of